

ORCHARD MEDICAL PRACTICE

Newsletter

It has been an extraordinarily busy winter period with a surge in covid and flu cases along with a lot of nasty coughs, colds and sore throats. Unfortunately, the practice has also experienced a lot of clinical and admin staff absences as a result of the various virus's that have been circulating. We have tried to maintain good access throughout the period and appreciate your patience when it has been difficult to do so, due to staff shortages.

The annual flu clinic has been very successful this year as a result of the practice receiving an early delivery of vaccine and being able to run our clinics during September rather than October, we hope that you felt this to be of benefit to you.

We are keen that you are aware of the recent **measles outbreak** and the importance of having your children vaccinated to help prevent the spread of infectious diseases that can cause long term harm

Travel Vaccinations – As we move toward summer and holidays abroad we want to remind you that we do provide a limited number of Travel Vaccines which are available from the NHS. It is important to note that we no longer provide a full Travel Clinic service, you would need to go to a private travel clinic for vaccines that are not available on the NHS.

Prior to booking your appointment you will need to check with your travel agent what vaccinations are needed for your holiday, this is your responsibility.

Cervical Screening – We are currently working with GP Federation Cervical Screening Lead Nurse who will be attending the surgery on 12th March, 9am -11am. She is keen to answer any questions or address any concerns that you may have regarding cervical screening. She will be available for you to drop in on that day. We hope to have more specialist attend in future for patient drop in sessions.

Staff changes

Dr Greenhow is currently on long term leave, he has taken time out to spend with family and we are not able to say yet when he will be back other than sometime later in the year! We understand that his regular patients will find this frustrating, however you will be able to see any other clinician in the meantime.

Dr Ngoka has now left the practice to take time out to spend with her young family. We hope to be able to recruit a new GP in the coming months, we will update you when a new GP has been appointed. We have a fantastic number of regular locum doctors who will be working with us in the meantime.

Shortly we will be joined by a new pharmacist and Nurse Practitioner. We have also had some new admin/reception staff join the practice, this will enable other staff to train and develop into new roles.

Physiotherapist – Natasha a qualified physiotherapist joined the practice in October. If you are experiencing Back, knee, shoulder, wrist, muscle, neck pain/sprain etc please ask to book directly in with Natasha – this will be a face to face appointment and enable you to be referred quicker if deemed necessary.

Hypertensive Patients – Like most surgeries we are suggesting to patients that it would be a good idea to purchase a BP monitor for use at home. The reason for this is that many patients like to monitor their blood pressure and whilst we offer an annual review it is of benefit to you to keep an eye on your blood pressure in case anything changes. It is also good if you can send into the practice home readings as these are much better than one off practice readings. Many patients suffer from "white coat syndrome" and as such may have higher readings than normal and this can affect what medication is prescribed for you.

NHS Health Checks – Aged between 40 – 74 years old with no long-term conditions you are eligible to have a free health check – please ask at reception – its an excellent opportunity for you to make sure that everything is as it should be!!

Bowel Cancer Screening – If you are sent a FIT test through the post it means that you are able to take part in the bowel cancer screening programme – its simple and easy to do, early detection of bowel cancer saves lives – please do this asap.

Blood Testing Due to excessive demand we are unable to provide testing for everyone within the practice – patients are encouraged to make an appointment with Landseer Road Phlebotomy Clinic, you can do this simply by calling 0300 303 5299 or book on line at www.swiftqueue.co.uk/index.php (you will need to register first to use this facility).

We hope that you have found this first newsletter to be informative, we aim to do this twice a year to keep you informed of any updates.

Patient Participation Meeting (PPG)

During the Covid period we were unable to continue with the Patient Participation Group, we are keen to start a new group and we want to do this remotely using teams rather than inconvenience you by having to attend meetings at the practice 2-3 times a year. As service users we are keen to hear your views on the services we provide and any suggestions for improvements that you make – we cannot always promise to make changes but will listen to your views and implement change where appropriate and feasible. If you are interested in being part of the PPG please send a message to franki.bulmer@nhs.net

Pharmacy First

Most pharmacies in Ipswich are now promoting a service called Pharmacy First, where we can send patients to them as a first contact. Please see a list below of what the pharmacies can deal with :

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| Acute Otitis Media* | 1 to 17 years |
| Impetigo | 1 year and over |
| Infected insect bites | 1 year and over |
| Shingles | 18 years and over |
| Sinusitis | 12 years and over |
| Sore throat | 5 years and over |
| Uncomplicated urinary tract infections | Women 16-64 years |

The pharmacies that are NOT taking part are Spring Road, Asda at Whitehouse, Orchard Street and Hawthorn Drive.